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OWLS HEAD HARBOR

OWLS HEAD

MAINE

S U R V E Y

(Review of Reports)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NEW ENGLAND DIVISION, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
424 TRAPELO ROAD
WALTHAM, MASS. 02154

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U. S. ARMY ENGINEER DIVISION, NEW ENGLAND

CORPS OF ENGINEERS

424 TRAPELO ROAD

WALTHAM, MASS. 02154

ADDRESS REPLY TO
DIVISION ENGINEER

REFER TO FILE NO. NEDED-R

23 March 1966

SUBJECT: Survey (Review of Reports) on Owls Head Harbor,
Owls Head, Maine

TO: Chief of Engineers
ATTN: ENGOW-PD

SYLLABUS

The Chief of Engineers on 21 December 1965, under authority of Section 107 of the 1960 River and Harbor Act, approved for accomplishment the improvement of navigation facilities at Owls Head Harbor, Maine. Formal adoption as a Federal project was made on 3 February 1966. The Division Engineer finds that no further navigation improvement in addition to that authorized is warranted at this time.

AUTHORITY

1. This report is submitted in compliance with a resolution adopted 19 May 1960 by the Committee on Public Works of the House of Representatives, as follows:

"Resolved by the Committee on Public Works of the House of Representatives, United States, that the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors be, and is hereby, requested to review the reports on Owls Head Harbor, Maine, contained in House Executive Document No. 67, 52nd Congress, and prior reports with a view to determining whether the existing project should be modified in any way at this time."

DESCRIPTION OF NAVIGATION CONDITIONS

2. Owls Head Harbor in the Town of Owls Head, Knox County, Maine, is 65 miles northeast of Portland and four miles southeast of Rockland, Maine.

3. The harbor itself is about 1,000 feet long and 900 feet wide. Depths vary from 0 to 10 feet at mean low water, at the harbor entrance. Most of the harbor is a mud flat at low tide. There is a herring weir located on the southerly side of the harbor. Immediately south of the harbor is a mud flat at low tide. There is a herring weir located on the southerly side of the harbor. Immediately south of the harbor entrance lies Owls Head Bay and Monroe Island. The bay forms a natural access channel over 700 feet wide with depths ranging from 33 to 73 feet between the harbor and the Island.

4. The harbor is well sheltered from winds from all quadrants except the northeast. The mean range of tide is 9.4 feet. The locality is shown on U.S. Coast and Geodetic Charts numbered 209 and 310 and on the map accompanying this report.

TRIBUTARY AREA

5. The area immediately tributary to Owls Head Harbor consists of the City of Rockland and the Town of Owls Head in Knox County. Rockland is the county seat and is also a deep water port and the major center of commercial fishing activities. Owls Head is a small village on the west side of Owls Head Harbor. In 1950, the population was 784 and by 1960 it had increased to 994. The Town has a tax valuation of \$792,145. The fishing industry provides the main source of income for the inhabitants of the town. The area is served by a network of good roads. A municipal airport is available in the town.

PRIOR REPORTS

6. A survey report published in Executive Document No. 67, 52nd Congress, 2nd Session, was favorable to the improvement of Owls Head Harbor, and is the basis of the existing Federal project completed in 1858, at Dodge Point, Owls Head, Maine.

7. Preliminary examination reports in 1884 and 1892 were unfavorable to the construction of further breakwater protection. No requests for Federal improvement of the harbor have been initiated between 1892 and 1960. No known improvements to navigation have been made by any local agency.

DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING NAVIGATION

8. The principal navigation difficulties in Owls Head Harbor are insufficient mooring space of adequate depth and insufficient depth for ready access by boats to the wharves in the harbor. In addition, crowding is a constant problem. Boats attempt to hover along the harbor entrance in an effort to seek protection from north-east winds but due to the lack of adequate space often collide with one another resulting in damage. Local interests report their lobster boats are constantly handicapped by groundings during periods of low water.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT

9. This survey report was authorized to determine the need and justification for providing access across the harbor to existing piers and protected anchorage area. A public hearing was held at Owls Head Central High School on 24 July 1963. Local interests at the hearing expressed the desire for a substantially increased

anchorage area adjacent to the shore and of adequate depth and size to provide for the needs of the existing and prospective fishing fleets expected to use the harbor. A representative of the Town of Owls Head presented for consideration a plan for dredging the Harbor to a depth of 6 feet over an area of about 12 acres. The Town feels the increased anchorage area at Owls Head Harbor would relieve present boat congestion, reduce groundings, and permit direct access to existing terminal facilities at all stages of the tide for all of the expected fishing and recreational craft.

10. A plan of improvement has been developed which represents essentially the desires of local interests. The plan of improvement, shown on the attached map, would provide for a safe anchorage basin with a total of 8.0 acres, 6 feet deep.

11. The plan represents the most economical and practical development for permitting increased use of both existing and future boat facilities. The scope and costs of the plan are of such magnitude as to make the plan eligible for accomplishment under the general authority of Section 107 of the 1960 River and Harbor Act. The plan was recommended for adoption under the general authority.

12. All Federal, State and local agencies interested or affected by the proposed navigation improvement were consulted during the study and they concur in the project plan.

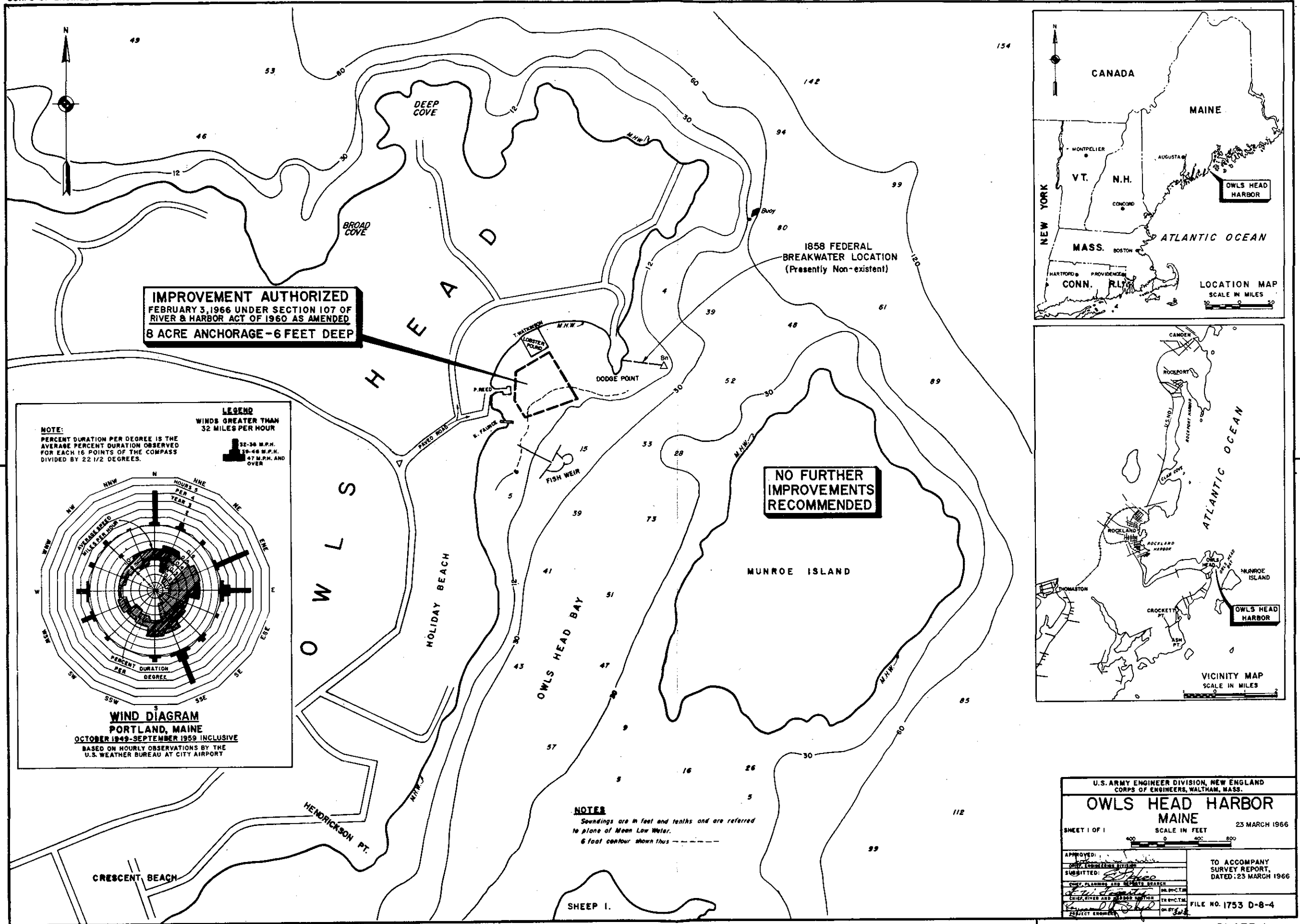
13. State and local officials were consulted concerning the suitability of the plan of improvement. By letter dated 15 March 1965 and 29 March 1965, State and local officials respectively commented on the adequacy of the proposed plan for meeting the navigation needs of the harbor. By letter of 14 July 1965, the Town of Owls Head forwarded information on the results of a Town Meeting held on 12 July 1965 which appropriated \$4,500 as its share of the required cash contribution. By letter of 20 January 1966 the Governor of the State of Maine gave his approval of the project.

14. Accordingly, under authority of Section 107 of the 1960 River and Harbor Act, a Federal project to provide the recommended improvement was formally adopted on 3 February 1966.

15. In view of the above action, the Division Engineer concludes that the needs of present and prospective navigation in Owls Head Harbor have been met and therefore recommends no further navigation improvement at this time.

Incl
Map

REMI O. RENIER
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Acting Division Engineer



OWLS HEAD HARBOR, OWLS HEAD, MAINE

Information Called for By Senate Resolution 148, 85th Congress
Adopted 28 January 1958

1. This study considered the need and economic justification of modifying the existing Federal project at Owls Head Harbor, to provide additional anchorage space for small boats.

2. The principal difficulties attending navigation in Owls Head Harbor are insufficient mooring space of adequate depth and insufficient depth for ready access by boats to the wharves in the harbor. Local interests requested an anchorage basin of 12 acres 6 feet deep in the harbor. The study found that additional anchorage areas should be provided.

3. As a result of the study, the Chief of Engineers approved an improvement for Owls Head Harbor under authority of Section 107 of the 1960 River and Harbor Act as amended to provide 8 acres of anchorage space 6 feet deep. The improvement was formally adopted as a Federal project on 3 February 1966. It is considered that the project as approved would be sufficient to meet the needs of the existing and prospective commercial fishing and recreational fleets.

4. Local interests concur that the plan of improvement authorized would meet the needs of present and prospective navigation, and have stated a willingness and ability to meet the requirements of local cooperation in connection with the project.

5. In view of the above provisions for small craft navigation in Owls Head Harbor, no further Federal improvement beyond that presently authorized is recommended.